



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

February 23, 2005

News Release

NEW ZEALAND AUTHORITIES SERVE 52 CHILD PORN WARRANTS, ARREST 23 BASED ON ICE INVESTIGATIVE LEADS *ICE Operation Predator strikes at child pornographers worldwide*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Acting on leads provided by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, New Zealand authorities served 52 warrants and arrested 23 individuals for child pornography-related activities.

To date, the authorities there have also seized 128 computers and more than 1,000 peripherals, including CD's, floppy disks and other media suspected as being used in the production and distribution of child pornography.

The enforcement action grew out of ICE's ongoing investigation into "RegPay," an Internet billing company based in Minsk, Belarus.

In January 2004, the company was charged with money laundering as well as providing credit card billing services for 50 child pornography Web sites worldwide and operating at least four child pornography Web sites on its own.

The investigation has resulted in guilty pleas by two officers of Connections USA, a Florida firm that processed RegPay's U.S. credit card transactions, and two guilty pleas by individuals affiliated with LB Systems, Inc., a California firm that helped RegPay process credit card transactions. Officers of RegPay suspected of organizing and carrying out the enterprise have been arrested and are being extradited to the United States for prosecution.

Having dismantled the leadership of this enterprise, ICE special agents are now focusing on those who purchased child porn subscriptions from the sites. Already, more than 190 individuals have been arrested in the United States and foreign law enforcement officials acting on ICE leads have arrested more than 900 others in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Some of the subscribers arrested to date include public and private school employees, including teachers, administrators, priests, coaches, bus drivers, campus ministers, and janitors. Additionally, ICE and partnered law enforcement agencies have arrested camp counselors, pediatricians, a circus clown, Boy Scout leaders, police officers, firefighters, and many others with direct access to children

or who held positions of trust. Some of these individuals were also found to have been involved in the production and distribution of child pornography.

The investigation, called "Falcon," is part of Operation Predator, a comprehensive national initiative to protect young people from sexual predators. Operation Predator targets human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers and foreign national predators whose crimes make them deportable.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at www.ice.gov.

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or www.cybertipline.com.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.